

**REPORT OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY GENERAL CONVENTION DEPUTATION TO THE
241ST DIOCESAN CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY**

The General Convention

The General Convention of The Episcopal Church — the highest legislative body of the denomination — meets every three years to do the business of the church. It meets as two Houses: The House of Bishops, consisting of all active and retired bishops, and the House of Deputies, consisting of priests, deacons, and lay people elected by their dioceses. Every diocese can elect four lay and four clergy deputies and up to four lay and four clergy alternate deputies. Each House sits and deliberates and votes separately, although there can be joint sessions for informational purposes. In addition to elections, voting is used to pass or reject Resolutions, which can state church policy, amend the Constitution or Canons of the church, or direct actions to be taken. Resolutions can only be acted upon if passed in the exact same language by each House prior to the adjournment of the Convention. Because of the volume of proposed Resolutions to be considered, much of the work of each House is done by Legislative Committees on specific subjects, whose reports on Resolutions are submitted to their House for action. Consent calendars are used extensively given the limited time for debate.

The 81st General Convention — 2024

Although the expectation is that General Conventions meet every three years, the 80th Convention was postponed from 2021 to 2022 and drastically shortened from ten legislative days to four as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. To make up for the lack of Legislative Committee sessions during Convention, that work was done in the three months preceding the Convention via Zoom meetings. Many of these elements were continued in 2024: The bulk of Legislative Committee work was done before the opening, and there were scheduled six days of legislative sessions with reduced Legislative Committee meetings to cover amendments to resolutions.

This year, the General Convention met from June 23 to 28 in Louisville Kentucky. Those attending from the Diocese of New Jersey were:

- The Right Reverend Sally French, Bishop of New Jersey
- The Reverend Canon Valerie L. Balling, First Clergy Deputy and Deputation Vice-Chair
- The Reverend Emily A. Mellott, Second Clergy Deputy
- The Reverend D. Scott Russell, Third Clergy Deputy
- The Reverend Angelo Wildgoose, Fourth Clergy Deputy and Deputation Chaplain
- The Reverend Canon Dr. James T. Yarsiah, First Clergy Alternate
- Canon Paul Ambos, Esq., First Lay Deputy and Deputation Chair
- Canon Barbara Okamoto Bach, Second Lay Deputy
- Canon Annette L. Buchanan, Third Lay Deputy
- Canon Noreen L. Duncan, Fourth Lay Deputy
- Canon Wendy V. Blackman, First Lay Alternate and Logistics Coordinator
- Dr. Karen G. Bemis, Second Lay Alternate and Deputation Secretary
- Mr. Marcus A. Gales, Third Lay Alternate
- Mr. Joseph Walker, Fourth Lay Alternate
- Ms. Catherine Ambos, Volunteer Supervisor

The Right Reverend William H. ("Chip") Stokes was eligible to attend but did not. Those elected to the Deputation who also did not attend in Louisville were:

The Reverend Marshall Shelly, Second Clergy Alternate

The Reverend Dr. Jon C. ("Chip") Graves, Third Clergy Alternate

Many members of the Deputation served on legislative committees active before, during, and some following the legislative sessions: Bishop French served as Secretary to the House of Bishops Legislative Committee on Congregational Vitality & Data-Driven Initiatives. In the House of Deputies, Deputy Balling was the Committee on Dispatch of Business Liaison to the Committee on Governance and Structure, Deputy Mellott was Chair of the Committee on Dispatch of Business, Deputy Wildgoose served on the Committee on Credentials, Deputy Ambos served on the Committee on Certification of Minutes, Deputy Bach served on the Committee on Environmental Stewardship and Care of Creation, and Deputy Duncan served on the Committee on Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations.

This last summer's Convention acted on nearly 400 Resolutions. Notable actions included the election of a new Presiding Bishop, reelection of the President of the House of Deputies, and the adoption of a \$143.2 million budget for the next three years. Numerous constitutional amendments were passed on a first or second reading, and many canons were amended as well. All of the final General Convention Resolutions are reported [here](#). Until the Episcopal Archives posts them, individual Resolutions with their original forms and associated documents can be found on the Virtual Binder here: <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions?house=HD&lang=en>. The following Resolution may be of significant interest to members of the Diocese of New Jersey as originating in Province II (there were no proposals this General Convention from the Diocese of New Jersey):

Resolution C035 — End the Practice of Labor Trafficking of Migrant Youth

The Diocese of New Jersey is a member of the Second Province of The Episcopal Church – The International Atlantic Province. Provinces are geographic associations of Dioceses formed for purposes of collaboration, communication, and advocacy of Diocesan and TEC goals. [Resolution C035](#) was approved by the Province II Synod for submission and was passed at the General Convention

Elections to Episcopal Church Offices from the Diocese of New Jersey

There were no nominees for 2024 General Convention elective offices from the Diocese of New Jersey.

Canon Annette Buchanan had been elected to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church at the 2022 General Convention, to serve until the 2027 General Convention

Resolutions Referred to Dioceses by the Secretary of the General Convention

For every General Convention, the Secretary of the General Convention (a) prepares a Summary of Actions listing the disposition of each Resolution brought before the Convention, (b) issues a

notice to Dioceses and to Secretaries of Diocesan Conventions of proposed amendments to the Book of Common Prayer or to the Episcopal Church Constitution, and (c) refers selected Resolutions to Diocese (i) for action or (ii) for their consideration.

The Summary of Actions is available in pdf format for downloading [here](#).

The two proposed amendments to the Episcopal Church Constitution and one on the Book of Common Prayer are covered in the Report of the Secretary of the Convention, Document 11 for this Diocesan Convention. Secretaries of Convention throughout the church are required to read or otherwise make known any such proposed amendments to their Diocesan Conventions and certify back that this has been done as a condition for such proposed amendments to be eligible for a second reading for possible final passage.

In addition, each Diocese is required to report back to the General Convention Office what response, if any, it has made to the Resolutions referred for action or for consideration. Accordingly, these listings are included in this Report, with links to the final version of each Resolution in the Virtual Binder.

Resolutions of Particular Note Regarding Liturgy

Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church governs changes in the Book of Common Prayer. Similar to amendments to the Constitution, amendments to the Book of Common Prayer require votes at two successive General Conventions, and in addition the change must have previously been authorized for "trial use". Notwithstanding these requirements, a single General Convention can do the following:

- (a) Amend the Tables of Lessons and Tables and Rubrics for Psalms
- (b) Authorize alterations and additions to the BCP for trial use
- (c) Authorize alternative and additional liturgies to supplement those in the BCP.

[Resolution A114](#) authorized for trial use under (b), subject to the consent of the Bishop in each Diocese, Expansive- Language Versions of Eucharistic Prayer C, until the 82nd General Convention. The text proposed was [appended to the Resolution](#), subject to the edits contained in the final version.

[Resolution A115](#) authorized as a supplement under (c), subject to the consent of the Bishop in each Diocese, Alternative Texts for the Good Friday Liturgy, until the 82nd General Convention. The texts proposed were [appended to the Resolution](#), subject to the edits contained in the final version.

[Resolution A116](#) authorized for trial use under (b) the addition of three alternative liturgies to the Book of Common Prayer 1979 designated as "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage I" (p. 423), "The Blessing of a Civil Marriage I" (p. 433), and "An Order for Marriage I" (p. 435). The text of these liturgies as proposed by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (The "SCLM") were [appended to the Resolution](#), subject to the edits contained in the final version. This Resolution is also included in the Report of the Secretary of Convention, Document 11, and the relevant portion of the SCLM report are in an Appendix to that report.

The foregoing liturgical proposals included authorization for translations and for making versions available electronically without cost.

[Resolution A160](#) authorized for trial use under (b) an amendment to the Catechism's "What is Holy Matrimony" question (BCP p. 861) to replace "the woman and the man" by "two people".

Resolutions Referred for Action

- [A023](#) Authorize and Support the use of the Best Practices Guide and Model Anti-Harassment Policy
- [A024](#) Limit on Confidential Settlement Agreements
- [A029](#) Divest from Fossil Fuels
- [A030](#) No Investment in Certain Weapons
- [A035](#) Establish Model Policies for Anti/Racism/Racial Reconciliation Work
- [A048](#) Adoption of the Proposal for the Exchangeability of the Diaconate in The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- [A078](#) Promote Equity and to Reduce Differences in Mental Health Outcomes
- [A079](#) Mental Health Sunday
- [A082](#) Support the Episcopal Veterans Network
- [A084](#) Join The Communion Forest Initiative
- [A085](#) Support for the Global Mission Advocates Network
- [A088](#) Consult with the Office of Global Partnerships
- [A089](#) Address Violence Against Women and Girls
- [A098](#) Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation
- [A099](#) Task Force for Indigenous Justice To Increase Advocacy Groups Reflecting Creation Care and Environmental Justice Ministries
- [A135](#) Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy
- [A161](#) The South Sudanese Anglican Diaspora in the United States
- [A166](#) Registration of Firearms; Licensing of Firearm Sellers, Buyers, and Users; Use of Taggants
- [A167](#) Water Rights for Indigenous Communities and Lands
- [B002](#) Build Eco-Region Creation Networks for Crucial Impact
- [B004](#) Commending Safe Gun Storage
- [C003](#) On Affordable Housing
- [C010](#) Access to Prison Ministries
- [C026](#) Religious Liberty
- [C031](#) Migration with Dignity
- [C032](#) A Prayer to Remember the Innocents
- [C035](#) End the Practice of Labor Trafficking of Migrant Youth
- [D006](#) Rejecting the Theology and Politics of Christian Zionism
- [D007](#) Peace Through Equal Rights in Israel/Palestine
- [D009](#) Swords Into Plowshares: U.S. Accountability and Responsibility in Rebuilding Gaza
- [D011](#) The Prohibition of Assault Weapons
- [D012](#) Conditioning U.S. Military Assistance to Israel on Human Rights and a Negotiated Peace
- [D013](#) Affirm the Imperative of a Palestinian State

- [D014](#) Declare Gun Violence a National Health Crisis
- [D017](#) Support Regulations on Generative Artificial Intelligence
- [D019](#) Justice and Peace in Ukraine
- [D021](#) Support for Child Labor Protections
- [D023](#) Support for the Association for Episcopal Deacons
- [D024](#) Recommending Use of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers
- [D027](#) Addressing Traffic Fatalities
- [D028](#) Close Guantánamo Bay Prison
- [D029](#) Commit to the 30x30 Initiative for Biodiversity
- [D031](#) Addressing the Ongoing Harm of Coercive and Abusive Christian Ministries
- [D039](#) Condemning Censorship

Resolutions Referred for Consideration

- [A034](#) Promoting Equitable Formation for Future Church Leaders through Dismantling Racism and Achieving Racial Justice and Healing Education in Seminaries and Schools of Theological Education
- [A036](#) Amend Canons to Use Approved Common Terminology to Describe Anti-Racism Work
- [A037](#) Accepting the agreement "Sharing the Gifts of Communion" between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
- [A038](#) Practical Guidance for Interreligious Relations
- [A039](#) Practical Guidance for Episcopal-Jewish Relations
- [A040](#) Practical Guidance for Christian-Muslim Relations
- [A052](#) Amend Canon IV.2, Canon IV.4.1.d, and Canon IV.8 to add Restorative Covenant as a possible outcome of Conciliation
- [A053](#) Amend Canons IV.2, IV.8.1, and IV.8.5 Regarding the Role of Intake officers
- [A054](#) Amend Canons IV.2, IV.11, IV.12, and IV.13 regarding the Church Attorney
- [A055](#) Amend Canons IV.2, IV.11.1, and IV.17.2.e regarding Investigators
- [A056](#) Amend Canon IV.5.4 on the Election of Members of the Court of Review
- [A057](#) Amend Canon IV.17.6 Regarding Suspension of a Bishop
- [A058](#) Amend Canons IV.6.8, IV.6.10, and IV.11.3 on Pastoral Response Without Disciplinary Action
- [A059](#) Create an Official List of Recognized Religious Orders and Christian Communities
- [A060](#) Amend Canon I.1.2.n.1.vi: Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
- [A061](#) Amend the following Canons I.12.3, III.6.6.c, III.8.6.d, III.8.6.7.c, III.10.5.d, III.11.3.b, and III.11.3.c based on 2022-A039
- [A063](#) Amend Canons I.2.2 : Term of Office of the Presiding Bishop
- [A064](#) Amend Canon I.1.6.d Capturing Clergy Records
- [A065](#) Amend Canon III.1.3
- [A066](#) Amend Canon V.1 to create a Custodian for the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church
- [A071](#) Amend the Constitution and Canons Relating to Mergers of Dioceses [Of Admission of New Diocese -- Second Reading]
- [A072](#) Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church [Of the Book of Common Prayer -- Second Reading]

- [A083](#) Affirm Anglican Connections
- [A092](#) Access to ordination and deployment
- [A093](#) Add provisions of 2018-B012 to canons
- [A103](#) Amend Canon III.11.8
- [A105](#) Amend Canon IV.5.4.g
- [A106](#) Amend Canon IV.15.5.a
- [A107](#) Amend Canon IV.19.12
- [A108](#) Proposal of Changes to Title I, Canon 17
- [A112](#) Authorize use of the "Expanded Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings"
- [A114](#) Authorize for use Expansive Language Versions of Eucharistic Prayer C
- [A115](#) Authorized use of alternative texts for the Good Friday liturgy
- [A117](#) Withdraw Rev. William Porcher DuBose from the Lesser Feasts and Fasts Calendar --
Second Reading
- [A121](#) Authorize the Commemoration of the Consecration of Barbara Clementine Harris --
Second Reading
- [A125](#) Add Optional Fast Days to Lesser Feasts and Fasts
- [A126](#) Transfer dates of commemorations in Lesser Feasts and Fasts
- [A127](#) Establish a Working Group to Update Biographies in Lesser Feasts and Fasts
- [A129](#) Lectionary for Lesser Feasts and Fasts
- [A130](#) Developing alternative hymn texts
- [A139](#) Amend Canon IV.6.4 -Intake Timeline
- [A140](#) Amend Canon IV.6.8 - Reference Panel
- [A141](#) Amend Canon IV.6.9 - Monthly Reports
- [A142](#) Amend Canon IV.6.7 – copy of notice
- [A143](#) Amend IV.17.3.b and IV.17.5 - Disciplinary Board for Bishops
- [A148](#) Amend Canons to Underscore Support for the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and
Justice
- [A160](#) Revise Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer
- [A168](#) Celebrate the Juncture of the Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern Michigan and Western
Michigan
- [A169](#) Celebrate the reunification of the Dioceses of Wisconsin
- [A174](#) Commemorate Diocesan Anniversaries
- [A227](#) Commend the life of Willie Howard Mays, Jr.
- [A230](#) Thanksgiving for all who ran for elected offices at General Convention
- [B008](#) Amend Canon II.3.6.a and II.4 to clarify authorization of liturgies
- [B009](#) Observing the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea 325 CE
- [B011](#) Commemoration of Harriet Tubman
- [C002](#) On Responsible Travel to the Holy Land
- [C009](#) Petition of the Episcopal Church In Navajoland to become a Missionary Diocese
- [C016](#) Amend Canon III.12 to Provide for the Transfer of Bishops to Churches in Communion
- [C017](#) Amend Canon III.7 to Provide for the Transfer of Deacons to Churches in Communion
- [C023](#) Commemorating The Philadelphia Eleven in the Church Calendar
- [C025](#) Juncture of The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan
- [D025](#) Amend Canon IV.6 regarding Intake Officers
- [D040](#) Amend Canon IV.13.13 to Provide for Notice of Dismissal
- [D041](#) Support the Adoption of an Ecumenical Feast Day of Creation in our Liturgical Calendar

- [D049](#) Increase by one the possible number of bishops suffragans in a Diocese.
- [D051](#) The Reunion of the Diocese of Wisconsin
- [D052](#) Amend Canon IV.10.3
- [D053](#) Amend Title IV to require timely appointments to church-wide disciplinary boards
- [D054](#) A Resolution to Address The Issue of Black Maternal Mortality Rate
- [D055](#) 50th Anniversary Triennium of the Ordination of Women
- [D056](#) Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza
- [D057](#) Advocate for Housing Solutions
- [D060](#) Support For a Solution to the Crisis in Haiti
- [D062](#) Support and Solidarity with Armenia
- [D067](#) Support Temporary Protected Status
- [D068](#) Addressing the Increase in Gambling
- [D070](#) Prayers for Haiti
- [D071](#) Governance support for the Diocese of Haiti and leadership for Dioceses in Crisis
- [D075](#) The Immediate Release of Ms. Layan Nasir, 24 from Administrative Detention in Israel

The Next General Convention

The 82nd General Convention is currently scheduled to meet in Phoenix, Arizona in July 2027, although meetings and orientation sessions will precede the first scheduled legislative session. Deputies and Alternates from the Diocese of New Jersey will (if the proposed amendment to Article X of the diocesan Constitution is passed) be elected at the 242nd Diocesan Convention in November 2025.

Those of us from the 81st General Convention are thankful for having had the opportunity to serve The Episcopal Church in this capacity, and we welcome the input from the Deputation to the 82nd once elected.

Respectfully submitted,

Canon Paul Ambos, First Lay Deputy & Chair
Canon Barbara Okamoto Bach, Second Lay Deputy
Canon Annette L. Buchanan, Third Lay Deputy
Canon Noreen Duncan, Fourth Lay Deputy
Canon Wendy V. Blackman, First Lay Alternate & Logistics Coordinator
Dr. Karen G. Bemis, Second Lay Alternate & Secretary
Mr. Marcus A Gales, Third Lay Alternate
Mr. Joseph Walker, Fourth Lay Alternate
The Reverend Canon Valerie L. Balling, First Clergy Deputy & Vice-Chair
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